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ANSWER

TO

Mr. MARK DAVIS's

THOUGHTS

ON

DANCING.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

Serious Conſiderations to diſſuade Chriſtian-Parents from teaching their Children to Dance.

By THOMAS OLIVERS.

Ubi eſt ſaltatis ibe eſt Diabolus. CHRYSOST.

Nemo ſobrius ſaltat. CICERO.

London:

PRINTED BY CHARLES PARAMORE,
CHAPEL-STREET, HOLYWELL-MOUNT;
AND SOLD BY G. WHITFIELD, AT THE CHAPEL,
CITY-ROAD; J. PARSONS, PATERNOSTER-
ROW; C. RIEDEL, CROWN-STREET,
SOHO. M,DCC,XCII.

23 Sf
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ANSWER, &c.

ABOUT ſixty years ago God raiſed up Mr. Weſley and others, to call ſinners to repentance. In doing this they cried aloud, not only againſt groſs and flagrant wickedneſs; but alſo againſt the vain and faſhionable Amuſements, which were ſo eagerly followed by all orders and degrees of people.

In a ſhort time they ſaw their labours crowned with abundant ſucceſs: multitudes being convinced of the evil of their doings, turned from ſin and folly unto the living God.

Theſe deſiring farther aſſiſtance in working out their ſalvation, united together in what we call Societies, and deſired Mr. Weſley, and his fellow-labourers, to watch over, and inſtruct them in running the race ſo lately ſet before them. This requeſt was readily complied with: when partly by ſer-

mons and exhortations, and partly by various writings, we endeavoured with all our might, not only to guard them againſt what all men allow to be ſinful; but alſo againſt ſuch inſtances of conformity to the world, which too many deem perfectly innocent.

In leſs then twenty years the number of theſe Societies was vaſtly increaſed. And as the members thereof uſed all diligence in buſineſs, together with all frugality, they greatly increaſed in wealth: ſo that many who at firſt had but ſmall beginnings, in a ſhort time grew conſiderably opulent. One conſequence of this was, as their families increaſed, and their children grew up, they endeavoured that theſe might have a better education than ſome of themſelves had experienced.

To this end they ſent them to religious boarding-ſchools; and urged as one reaſon for ſo doing, that they would be leſs in the way of buſineſs, leſs liable to be corrupted by irreligious ſervants they were often obliged to keep; and becauſe, at ſuch ſchools, they would be taught whatever was neceſſary to make them uſeful members of ſociety;

ciety; while their religious principles and morals would be effectually preſerved.

'In a courſe of years, many of the parents becoming perſons of conſiderable property, were not content that their children ſhould be taught uſeful knowledge only, but deſired that they might learn ſomething entertaining. And as muſic has always been looked on in this light, by the generality of wiſe and holy men, and has not only been uſed in the Church on earth, but is repreſented as a very particular part of the employment of Heaven, we did not object to the Methodiſt-children learning it: ſuppoſe it was of that ſort which might be uſed in the ſervice, and to the glory of God.

"The children being at boarding-ſchools, and many of them under the hands of muſic-maſters, what followed but that theſe young Methodiſt-quality muſt dreſs like the other young gentlemen and ladies (for all are gentlemen and ladies in a boarding-ſchool!) On ſeeing this, good Mr. Weſley took the alarm; and ſtrongly, and in every poſſible way, cautioned the people againſt conforming to the faſhions of the world: and, in particular, not to dreſs either themſelves or their children in a manner unbecoming perſons profeſſing godlineſs.

In proceſs of time the ſcandal of the croſs in a good meaſure ceaſed; on which many worldly people wiſhed to have their children brought up in Methodiſt-ſchools: only they ſaid, they *muſt* be taught to dance. For many years all our ſchool-maſters, and ſchool-miſtreſſes, rejected this propoſal as abſolutely inadmiſſible, and would by no means receive a ſingle ſcholar on any ſuch terms: and, to their honour be it ſpoken, many rejected it to the end; chuſing rather to give up the buſineſs than to follow it at the expence of a good conſcience, or contrary to the rules of the Society. But all were not thus minded: for firſt one, and then another, rather than loſe opportunities of enlarging their ſchools, were prevailed on to teach dancing: by which means many of our people who abounded in wealth, and were, ſometimes, leſs eminent in religion, ſuffered their children to learn to dance.

Mr. Weſley ſeeing the dangerous tendency of this evil, and that it gained ground apace, in 1785, propoſed it as a point worthy the attention of Conference; when, after mature conſideration, it was condemned. But that not proving effectual, to put a ſtop to this and other inſtances of worldly conformity,

formity, he preached and wrote againſt it more than ever; and almoſt with his dying breath cryed out, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, &c."

But notwithſtanding theſe endeavours to prevent it, many inſtances of worldly conformity gained ground, and, among the reſt, ſeveral of our ſchools continued to employ dancing-maſters; and others began to do the ſame who had not done it before. This alarming the Preachers who were the ſucceſſors of Mr. Weſley, when they met together in Conference, laſt July, after deeply deploring the loſs of him who had ſo long been at their head, and conſidering that the care of this great body of people now devolved on them; with much prayer to God for his aſſiſtance, they ſet their ſhoulders to the burden, and determined to do all in their power to guard and help the people now committed to their care.

In order to this end, among many other important queſtions they propoſed the following:

"Queſt. 32. Have we not made too great "advances towards conformity to the world?

"Anſw. We fear we have.

"Queſt.

"Queſt. 33. How ſhall we prevent it?

"Anſw. Thoſe ſchool-maſters and ſchool-
"miſtreſſes who receive dancing-maſters
"into their ſchools, and thoſe parents who
"employ dancing-maſters for their chil-
"dren, ſhall be no more members of our
"Societies."

When this rule was made known in London, my old friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. M. Davis refuſed his compliance: in conſequence of which, his name was left out of the liſt of preachers. On ſeeing this he publiſhed his defence in a pamphlet intitled, "Thoughts on Dancing, occaſioned by ſome "late Tranſactions among the people called "Methodiſts."

As Mr. Davis ſeems to have fully exerted himſelf on the occaſion, and as many of our young people are too well prepared to receive doctrines of this kind; either his tract muſt be anſwered, or elſe we muſt abrogate our rules on this ſubject, and ſo let dancing, and all its conſequences, overflow us like a flood.

It is, therefore, partly from conviction, and partly at the requeſt of ſeveral very materially concerned, that I undertake this work; which I hope to execute to the

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ſatisfaction of every impartial reader, and at the ſame time, without giving any additional offence, even to Mr. Davis himſelf.

Page 4. Mr. Davis ſays, "When I read this "anſwer I was both ſurprized and grieved; "becauſe I conſidered it rather calculated "to give offence, and ſtir up ſtrife, than to "correct a fault." To this I anſwer; It is impoſſible it ſhould give much offence to a body of people, who, in general, hold dancing, and all other vain amuſements, in an abomination: ſo far from it, that I believe nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thouſand, will rejoice that the immediate ſucceſſors of Mr. Weſley have ſuch zeal for God, as determines them to nip ſuch evils in the bud; although, by ſo doing, a few of the moſt wealthy among us may take offence. But ſuppoſe it offended a far greater number, is that a ſufficient reaſon why thoſe who have the care of ſuch a body of people ſhould ſuffer the follies of the world to ſteal in among them? Things offenſive to individuals have always been executed in the Church of God; and ſo they muſt be to the end, or truth, purity, and good order will not be preſerved.

Ibid.

Ibid. Mr. Davis adds, "I hoped this rule "or law, like ſome others concerning dreſs, "tobacco, &c. made by Mr. Weſley ſome "years ago, would ſleep reſpecting execu- "tion, and conſequently, might be conſi- "dered as merely expreſſive of the private "opinion of the framers." Rules, and laws, merely expreſſive of private opinions! Was it ever heard of before that rules were made, and laws enacted, only to expreſs private opinions? When Mr. Davis gives his private opinion he ſays, I think, or I believe ſo or ſo; but when he makes a law, he ſays, it ſhall, or it ſhall not be done. Now this is the way that the law againſt dancing is expreſſed, "Let none that employ dancing- "maſters remain among us."

But Mr. Davis "hoped that this rule or "law would ſleep like ſome others con- "cerning dreſs, tobacco, &c." With regard to the rule againſt dreſs, this has not altogether ſlept; for Mr. Weſley always put it in force in what we call the Band-Society, for which it was principally intended. And as to tobacco, Mr. Davis knows this was prohibited under the following reſtriction, "Unleſs preſcribed by a phyſician." Now, as to many who made uſe of tobacco, it

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was preſcribed by a phyſician, or ſome other medical-man, or elſe by the advice of a frien dwho had found it uſeful in flatulencies, defluctions, &c.

But ſuppoſe ſome have taken it up as an uſeleſs habit, there is no compariſon between conniving at a pipe of tobacco, and ſuffering dancing, with all its conſequences, to ſteal in upon us: for he muſt be wonderfully ſhort-ſighted, or elſe very partial to his own intereſt, who ſees no more danger in permitting fiddling and dancing to be practiſed among a religious body of people, than even in ſuffering a young woman to wear a fine cap, or an old man to ſmoak a pipe of tobacco.

Page 5. Mr. Davis ſays, "Nov. 2. I "called on Mr. James Rogers at the Cha-"pel-houſe, and aſked him whether it was "meant to drop the ſubject of dancing, or "to bring it on next quarterly-meeting— "told him jocoſely, that I intended to ſpeak "to the point; and added, our law ought "not to condemn any man before he is "heard, and we conſider what he ſaith. To "which he replied, The Preachers in Lon-"don cannot alter a rule of Conference: "conſequently, ſaying any thing among "them

"them will anſwer no end." Undoubtedly Mr. R. was right; for the Conference were the framers of the law, and the Preachers in their ſeveral diſtricts, were only the executioners thereof: therefore, as it would be abſurd for a criminal to offer to diſpute a law before an inferior magiſtrate, whoſe only buſineſs is to put it into execution; ſo it was equally abſurd in Mr. Davis to make ſuch a propoſal to Mr Rogers, whoſe only buſineſs in this caſe is, to execute, not to mend the law, or to diſpence with it.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays "I am ſorry thus to "be dragged into a public controverſy by "men with whom I hoped to live in the "moſt cordial friendſhip, my few remaining "days." And what hinders but that he may? As for my part, I have long viewed Mr. Davis as a ſenſible and honeſt man, and only lament that his ſituation in life has led him into ſo great an error; therefore, ſo far as I am concerned, I have not the leaſt inclination to treat him with the ſmalleſt degree of diſreſpect, or any way contrary to brotherly love: and as to my brethren, though they think it their duty to enforce a rule, made in ſo ſolemn a manner, I hope not one of them will entertain any diſguſt againſt

him.

him any farther than the buſineſs in hand requires.

Page 7. Mr. Davis, ſpeaking of Mr. Weſley, ſays, "I will venture to aſſert, "from his well-known diſcernment and con- "ſummate prudence, that he ranked dancing "among the res indifferentiæ, reſpecting re- "ligion; innocent or ſinful, according to "the mind and circumſtances of the perſons "practiſing." This is impoſſible. For had this been the caſe, how came he to make an expreſs rule againſt it, and publiſh it to all the world? Beſides, if he had looked upon dancing in that light, he would have made an exception in favour of it in his cenſures on the other vain amuſements of the world, which certainly he never did: ſo far from it, that I have more than once heard him ſay, "Muſic and gardening are the only innocent diverſions;" but not a word in favour of dancing.

Page 9. Mr. Davis ſays, "None, I hope, "will ſet themſelves up for judges, until "they have with candour made themſelves "acquainted with the nature of the diſpute." This certainly is right. But I am very apprehenſive that the greateſt part of the people called Methodiſts, think themſelves ſo per-

fectly informed concerning the folly, and evil tendency of dancing, that they will hardly come to Mr. Davis, or any other, for more perfect information; but if any ſhould think otherwiſe, and ſo read his book, with a deſign to be better inſtructed in the doctrine of dancing, doubtleſs they ought to do it with candour.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays farther, "I ſincerely "pray, that none may indulge a reſentful or "cenſorious ſpirit, whatever the reſult of "this enquiry be." I anſwer; though I ſincerely wiſh his prayer may be heard, yet I fear thouſands will feel ſuch reſentment, at the thought of an old Preacher, employing ſo much good ſenſe and learning in behalf of dancing, as will awaken their holy indignation to a very high degree.

Again he ſays, "I have only conſulted "my Bible, human-nature, and my own "ſituation in life, in revolving the ſubject "in my mind." It is certain he has conſulted his Bible; and ſo have many others on a great variety of occaſions equally as abſurd as the doctrine of dancing. Again, he ſays he has conſulted "human-nature;" I fear he has not conſulted the whole of it on this occaſion. For had he done this, he

he would have found that there is a ſpirit in man which is in a fallen condition, and then have looked out for ſomething to raiſe and heal it, which would prove far more effectual than dancing: he adds, I have conſulted "my own ſituation in life." I verily believe, if it had not been for this, Mr. Davis had never conſulted his Bible or human-nature on dancing. But if he had conſulted his Bible only on this head, he would have found there that a family may be ſupported without the help of a dancing-maſter; for he would have found that the bleſſing of the Lord it maketh rich, Prov. x. 22. He would have found that the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Pſal. xxxiv. 11. and that if we ſeek firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added unto us, Matt. vi. 33.

Having made ſuch obſervations on his preface as I thought neceſſary, I proceed to the moſt material part of his work, viz. to conſider his arguments in ſupport of dancing. But before we do this, we muſt conſider what we mean by dancing. And there is the more need of this becauſe danc-

ing has not always been the ſame in all places.

According to all accounts, dancing among the ancient Jews, and others was for many ages quite inartificial; conſiſting of ſkipping, leaping and jumping, and a great variety of other gambols: hence Mr. Davis himſelf tells us, page 15, that the Hebrew verb רקד, raked, is rendered by Buxtorf, ſalire, ſubſalire, to leap, to jump, to ſkip. But as this is not the dancing intended in the preſent diſpute, it is nothing to the purpoſe.

The dancing now under conſideration I call, A practical Science, the end of which is either emolument, or elſe vain and idle amuſement.

And, firſt, I call it a Science; becauſe it is a theory conſiſting of a number of rules, arranged in a regular order. Secondly, I call it a practical ſcience, becauſe its theory is not intended to be a matter of mere ſpeculation; but rather conſiſts of rules which are to be put into practice. Thirdly, I ſaid, the end of which is either emolument or amuſement: it is emolument in thoſe who dance for hire, either in public or private, as well as in all who make a

- livelihood

livelihood thereof by teaching it: but the general deſign of it is mere amuſement. Fourthly, I call it *vain* amuſement; becauſe it does not anſwer the end. Amuſement is nearly the ſame as diverſion. Now diverſion, properly ſpeaking, is intended to relieve the body or mind from the ſeverity of too intenſe labours; that after this relief we may reſume our labour with greater advantage. But dancing will not do this; for it rather fatigues and diſſipates our powers, than revives and ſtrengthens them; hence it is that however unfit for labour perſons have been before dancing, they have been abundantly more ſo after it. Again, I called it an *idle* amuſement; becauſe it originates in idleneſs, and is generally followed by idle perſons. Thoſe who are quite intent on uſeful labours, either of the body or mind, have little inclination for dancing; of conſequence are ſeldom, if ever, exerciſed therein. Secondly, it is generally followed by idle perſons. The perſons moſt addicted to dance are either ſuch as think they have little or nothing elſe to do, or elſe ſuch as know they have buſineſs, but are too idle to do it. Now it is *this* dancing, and this only, which is the ſubject of our preſent diſpute.

Page 11. Mr. Davis ſays, "Dancing, ſo "far as we mean to take it under con- "ſideration, may be viewed, I. As a natural "manner of expreſſing our joy." I anſwer, It is not ſo natural a manner of expreſſing it, but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expreſſed; nor is it ſo natural but that there may be joy expreſſed when there is no dancing.

And, firſt, It is not ſo natural but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expreſſed. In idea, the joy which is expreſſed muſt be prior to the expreſſion of it, as that joy is the foundation on which the expreſſion is built, or the ſource from whence it flows, Now I aſk, is it becauſe dancers have cauſe to rejoice, and therefore do actually rejoice, that they go to dance, in order to expreſs that joy? Do they not rather dance without any prior joy exciting them to it? Do they not dance in general merely for the ſake of dancing, while their hearts are as far from rejoicing as the heart of an oak? Nay, do they not frequently dance in order to ſooth their ſorrows, to baniſh their fears, and to drive conviction quite away? It is certain, then, that perſons may

dance

dance when no joy is the cauſe of it, or can be expreſſed thereby.

Secondly, It is not ſo natural but that there may be joy, and every proper expreſſion of it without dancing. When our Lord rejoiced in ſpirit, Luke x. 21. doubtleſs he properly expreſſed it; but did he dance in order to that end? So when the Virgin Mary ſaid, My ſpirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, ſhe expreſſed it in a very "natural manner," yet we have no account of her dancing. Again, We are told, Acts v. 41. That Peter and John went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt; but it is not ſaid that they danced in order to a full and proper expreſſion of it. St. Paul ſaith, Phil. iv. 10. I rejoice in the Lord greatly; but he gives no account in what manner he danced to expreſs it! Heb. x. 34. tells us that the Hebrew-Chriſtians took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods: and no doubt but they expreſſed their joy in a very natural and becoming manner, though we have no account of their dancing. Once more, when St. Paul ſaid, Phil. iv. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, he hardly expected the Philippians to

dance

dance always in order to expreſs it in the moſt "natural manner."

Beſides, there have been innumerable inſtances of rejoicings, on a great variety of occaſions, which have been very fully expreſſed, without ſo much as a ſingle thought of dancing; therefore joy may be expreſſed in a very natural manner without the help of dancing.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays farther, "Dancing "conſidered as geſtures of nature, excited by "pleaſure, eſpecially in youth, who are al- "ways greatly diſpoſed for action, is as na- "tural, and as innocent, abſtractedly con- "ſidered, as ſmiling, laughing, or any other "manner of expreſſing our joy. This kind "of dancing always has, and always will be "practiſed by human beings on certain oc- "caſions." From this account, compared with the following pages, we learn, that by geſtures of nature, Mr. Davis means, leaping, ſkipping, jumping, &c. But this is not the dancing prohibited by Mr. Weſley and the Conference. It never entered into their thoughts to forbid theſe either to children or grown perſons, ſuppoſe they were done with decency, and when they were any way neceſſary. But the dancing which we forbid,

forbid, and which Mr. Davis has here undertaken to defend, is that Scientific Dancing, which is in common uſe, and which is taught by our dancing-maſters. All, therefore, that he has ſaid concerning geſtures of nature, excited by pleaſure, and expreſſive of joy, ſerves only to puzzle the queſtion, and to hide the true ſtate of it from his readers.

Again, If this dancing which conſiſts of leaping, jumping, and ſkipping, are geſtures of nature, and are as natural to us as ſmiling, laughing, &c. and if "our firſt exertions "in this way are generally as unpremeditated, "as laughing, crying, &c." what need of a dancing-maſter to teach it? Surely, in this caſe, a dancing-maſter, that is, a leaping-maſter, a jumping-maſter, or a ſkipping-maſter, is as abſurd and needleſs as a ſmiling-maſter, a laughing-maſter, or a crying-maſter.

Page 12. "Children when greatly pleaſed, "or greatly angered, as naturally dance as "they laugh or cry." Do they naturally dance minuets, jigs, hornpipes and country-dances? And if they do it ſo naturally, what need of the trouble and expence of a maſter to teach them? Again, if "Children

"when

"when greatly angered—naturally dance," is the dancing which is the natural effect of that anger, a natural manner of expreſſing their joy!

Ibid. "If the joy be innocent, our out-"ward expreſſion of it by dancing can have "no more guilt in it than there is in a joy-"ful countenance, or a joyful tongue." I anſwer; multitudes, whoſe joy was unqueſtionably innocent, ſhewed it both by a joyful countenance, and a joyful tongue, yet never ſhewed it by artificial dancing: witneſs Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and myriads beſides.

But "David, we are told in 2 Sam. vi. "14, 16. leaped and danced before the "Lord with all his might." True; but in what manner did he dance? certainly not in that way now under conſideration. For Mr. Davis himſelf tells us that "There are "three verbs in the Hebrew language, each "of which is tranſlated to *dance* in our En-"gliſh Bible." The firſt of which is "רקד, "rakad, which Buxtorf renders ſalire ſub-"ſalire, to leap, to jump to ſkip. This verb "is uſed in Pſal. cxiv. 4, 6, where it is "ſaid the mountains ſkipped like rams, and "the little hills like lambs. And in Pſal.

"xxix.

"xxix. 6. deſcribing the awful effects of "lightning and thunder, under the majeſtic "idea of the voice of Jehovah which maketh "the cedars of Lebanon to ſkip like a calf, "Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. "And in its participial form in 1 Chron. "xv. 29. Michal, the daughter of Saul, "looking out at a window, ſaw king David "dancing and playing." I have quoted this paſſage at large becauſe it gives us the opinion, not only of the great Buxtorf; but alſo of Mr. Davis himſelf.

Now according to both theſe authors, the dancing of David before the ark conſiſted only of leaping, jumping and ſkipping: of ſkipping like rams and young lambs: of ſkipping like a calf and a young unicorn; and therefore it is nothing to the preſent purpoſe, ſeeing it bears no reſemblance to the dancing taught in our ſchools, which is prohibited by the Methodiſts.

And that the dancing of David was of the ſort mentioned above, and not of that genteel and faſhionable ſort now in uſe among princes and others, appears from the ſneers and contempt which Michal ſhewed on the occaſion. For it is ſaid, 2 Sam. vi. 16. That when Michal ſaw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord, ſhe deſpiſed him

him in her heart. And the reaſon ſhe gave for this is mentioned verſe 20, becauſe he uncovered himſelf to day, in the eyes of the ſervants of his ſervants, as one of the vain fellows ſhameleſsly uncovereth himſelf. It was therefore on account of his uncovering himſelf, and leaping and ſkipping in a moſt inartificial and ruſtic manner, or as Montanus and Calaſio render the word מברבר in morem capræ ſaltabit, in the manner of, or like a goat, which cauſed Michal to deſpiſe him, and to upbraid him with imitating the vain and ſhameleſs fellows.

Page 14. The next inſtance Mr. Davis produces in favour of dancing, is Jephthah's daughter. His words are, "In Judges xi. "3, 5. we are told, that Jephthah, returning "from the ſlaughter of the Ammonites, was "met by his daughter and her companions "with timbrels and with dances." With regard to this paſſage I obſerve, firſt, that the inſtance is ſo remote, and the circumſtances are ſo different, that if we allow it to be any argument in favour of modern dancing, it muſt be owned to be a very farfetched one. But I do not allow it to be any argument at all; for the dancing which the

the Methodiſts forbid, and which Mr. Davis is now defending, is artificial dancing: that is, the dancing which is taught and practiſed by art. But will Mr. Davis ſay that there was any ſuch dances in Iſrael in the days of the Judges? I believe he will not. And yet we allow, there was that among them which we call dancing; ſuch as leaping, jumping, ſkipping, &c. by which the people expreſſed their gladneſs on a great variety of occaſions: and this, or ſomething like it, was the dancing of Jephthah's daughter and her companions.

Should it be ſaid, "But they came with timbrels; therefore it muſt be dancing by rule, ſeeing it was dancing with muſic:" I anſwer, it is certain that the muſic of thoſe times, and long after, was as rude, and inartificial, as their dancing poſſibly could be; and therefore I conclude that their dancing muſt be equally inartificial, and, of conſequence, that it bore no analogy to the dancing now in diſpute. The truth of the matter ſeems to be this: Jephthah returning from the ſlaughter of the Ammonites, his daughter and her companions went out to meet him, playing on timbrels, and with ſuch other ex-

 preſſions

preſſions of joy as became their ſex, and the ſolemnity of the occaſion.

Ibid. Mr. Davis' next proof is in 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. where it is ſaid, the women came out of all the cities of Iſrael, ſinging and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with inſtruments of muſic: and they anſwered as they played and ſaid, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands. Now on this paſſage I obſerve, firſt, that it is ſaid, The women came out of all the tribes of Iſrael: that is, they came in great multitudes; even thouſands upon thouſands. Now if we add to theſe all the men who came before them, with them, and after them, there muſt have been quite too many for artificial dances; for we all know that in ſome dances, a ſingle couple will occupy the greateſt part of a conſiderable room. Now if there were only twenty thouſand preſent, it muſt take up the whole ſide of a country, to make ſufficient room for ſuch a number to dance regularly and artificially. Secondly, theſe dancers muſt be uncommonly induſtrious in their dancings; for they muſt, firſt obſerve tune and time in playing with their hands: ſecondly, attend to all the diverſity

of

of ſteps, in artificial dancings, with their feet: and make the reſponſes with their voices, ſome of them crying, Saul hath ſlain his thouſands, and others replying, David his ten thouſands, which is too abſurd to be ſuppoſed. But the truth ſeems rather to be this. When the people heard what Saul and David had done, they gathered together, in multitudes from all parts, and expreſſed their great joy in a promiſcuous manner, and with ſuch triumphant ſounds and motions as cannot poſſibly be expreſſed by artificial dancing.

Ibid. What is ſaid in 1 Kings i. 40. concerning the coronation of Solomon, is nothing to the purpoſe. The words are, And all the people piped with pipes, or, as it is in the margin, with flutes, and rejoiced with great joy, ſo that the earth rent with the ſound of them. Now I obſerve, firſt, that there is not a word, or a ſyllable, either in the text, or in the marginal reading, concerning dancing. But if we allow Dr. Robertſon's rendering of the Hebrew word, מחוללים, "come after him tripudiantes ad "tibias, dancing to flutes," that dancing could be no other than that mentioned above in the caſe of David, Jephthah, and

the people in the days of Saul; for is it not ridiculous to ſuppoſe that "All the people, perhaps to the amount of fifty or a hundred thouſand, who were rending the earth with their ſhouts, &c. ſhould have room, time, opportunity, or even inclination to dance artificial dances? Let thoſe judge, who were preſent at the coronation of his preſent majeſty, if any thing of this kind either was, or could be done.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays, "Exod. xv. 20, 21, "relates, that Miriam the propheteſs, the "ſiſter of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, "and all the women went after her with "timbrels and with dances: and Miriam "anſwered them, Sing unto Jehovah, for "he hath triumphed glorioufly; the horſe "and the rider hath he thrown into the ſea. "This ſtory favours the foregoing con-"jecture. May we not ſuppoſe that Mi-"riam and her company of women formed "themſelves into a ſeparate choir, and that "their joyous motions were regulated by "muſic, vocal and inſtrumental, while they "repeated the triumphant words of the "twenty-firſt verſe?" I anſwer, we have no reaſon to believe any ſuch thing; but quite the contrary.

To

To make this appear let us, firſt, conſider the ſtate of the Hebrews, both men and women. A little before this they were in abſolute ſlavery in Egypt, where their fore-fathers had been for four hundred and forty years: ſecondly, that for a long time they had ſuffered moſt cruel oppreſſions, which were intended, not only to prevent their flouriſhing: but even to deſtroy them. To this end they were appointed to labour in the moſt ſervile employments: ſuch as making of bricks. And leſt this ſhould not oppreſs them enough, they were obliged to make the full quantities, even without ſtraw: ſo that the men may, with great propriety be called, The brick-makers of Egypt; and the women, the brick-makers' mothers, wives, ſiſters and daughters. Now was it ever known that ſuch women were great adepts at artificial muſic and dancing? And can we ſuppoſe that while the men where toiling under the rod of their taſk-maſters, their women were improving under the tuition of their dancing-maſters! and that they were doing this, even while their cries and groans were entering into the ears of the God of heaven? It is certain, then, that unleſs they did this, they could know no-

thing of artificial muſic and dancing: and that whatever muſic and dancing was found amongſt them, muſt be of the loweſt and moſt inartificial kind: much inferior to that which is now found among our modern brick-makers and their families. Mr. Davis's ſuppoſition then, that Miriam and her company of women formed themſelves into a ſeparate choir, as our modern muſicians and dancers do, is quite groundleſs; for all we can ſuppoſe they did was, to ſound, in a rude and artleſs manner, the imperfect inſtruments they brought out of Egypt, and to ſhew ſuch other demonſtrations of joy, as is natural to a poor and oppreſſed people, juſt eſcaped out of the jaws of deſtruction.

Page 15. Mr. Davis ſays, "David in "Pſal. xxx. 11. ſays, addreſſing himſelf to "Jehovah, Thou haſt turned my mourning "into dancing." I anſwer; in the other tranſlation, which we have in our Common-Prayer-Book, it is rendered, Thou haſt turned my heavineſs into joy. Accordingly Dr. Hammond hath paraphraſed it, "At length my prayer hath been heard, and all my ſorrow and affliction exchanged for joy." And he obſerves in his note on the place that "the copy of the 72 anciently,

"as

"as well as now read it εις χαραν, into joy,
"and ſo is followed by the Latin, Syriac,
"and Arabic."

Again, Mr. Davis informs us that in "Pſal.
"cxlix. 3. it is ſaid, Let them praiſe his
"name in the dance." I anſwer, the mar-
"ginal reading is, Let them praiſe his name
with the pipe. Again, "In Pſal. cl. 4.
"Praiſe him with the timbrel and the dance."
I anſwer, Here again the margin reads it,
with the pipe: ſo that in neither of theſe
places is there any thing certain concerning
dancing; eſpecially as it is now taught in
our ſchools.

Mr. Davis ſaith again, "Pſal. lxxxvii. 7.
"is rendered by Buxtorf in his Hebrew
"Lexicon, Et cantantes æque ac tripudi-
"antes: i. e. as well the ſingers as the
"dancers ſhall be there." To this I anſ-
ſwer, the text is, As well the ſingers as the
players on inſtruments ſhall be there. In
the other tranſlation it is, The ſingers alſo
and the trumpeters ſhall be there. In the
margin of Dr. Hammond's paraphraſe it is,
"but the ſingers as well as the minſtrels ſhall
"come," and in his note he ſaith, "שרים the
"ſingers כחללים as, or like, the minſtrels,
"ſhall recite or count." In the ſame note

he

lie obſerves again, "As at the removal of "the ark, the ſingers go before, and the "minſtrels follow after, the ſingers begin "and lead the tune, as the precentors, and "the players on inſtruments followed after, "as the choir; ſo here the ſingers are ſup-"poſed to begin, and the minſtrels or play-"ers on inſtruments, taberers tympaniſtæ, "ſaith the Jewiſh Arab, follow to the ſame "tune" From what has been ſaid it is evident, that there is nothing ſaid about dancing, either of one ſort or another.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays, "From theſe paſ-"ſages we may certainly conclude, 1. That "dancing was practiſed in the religious "worſhip of the Jewiſh Church, and 2. That "it was connected with, and conſequently "regulated by, muſic both vocal and in-"ſtrumental." I anſwer, that no ſuch thing appears from any paſſage which he has quoted. And that it was no part of the religious worſhip of the Jewiſh church appears from hence, that though we have a full and particular account of all the officers of the Tabernacle and Temple, we have no account of the dancers, either maſters or others.

In

In 1 Chron. xv. 18. we are told that Zechariah, Ben, Jaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, &c. were the heads of the porters. Then over the ſingers, Heman, Aſaph, and Ethan were appointed to ſound with cymbals of braſs. Then Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, &c. were over the pſalteries on Alamoth. Mattithiah, &c. were over the harps on the Sheminith to excel. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites was for, or over the ſong, becauſe he was ſkilful. Berechiah and Elkanah were door keepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, &c. did blow the trumpets.

I have been the more particular here, to ſhew that, though we have ſo diſtinct an account of all the ſervices, and officers of the tabernacle and temple, even from the high-prieſt down to the meaneſt porter; and particularly of the ſeveral ſorts of muſic, and the maſters thereof; we have not one ſyllable concerning dancing-maſters: which is an infallible proof that there were no ſuch beings employed in any part of the "religious worſhip of the Jewiſh Church."

As to Mr. Davis' critical obſervations on the Hebrew verbs, all that is material in them has been taken notice of above; and

therefore

therefore I next proceed to conſider the proofs of dancing which he has brought from the New Teſtament.

And firſt, Mr. Davis quotes Matt. xi. 17. and its parallel place, Luke vii. 32. where our Lord ſaith, We have piped and ye have not danced. To this I anſwer, If the dancing here ſpoken of is to be underſtood literally, we muſt ſay that our Lord and the Baptiſt literally piped; which certainly was not the caſe. All therefore, that can here be meant is, that there was ſomething in the preaching of Chriſt and the Baptiſt which bore ſome reſemblance to children piping to their fellows; and ſomething in the Jew which reſembled the others refuſing to dance. But ſuppoſe we were to underſtand the words literally, without any metaphor or alluſion; what reſemblance is there between the dances of children in the ſtreet, and thoſe taught by modern dancing-maſters?

Again, Mr. Davis ſays, "Matt. xiv. 6. "and its parallel place, Mark vi. 22. in-"forms us, that the daughter of Herodias. ωρχήσαλο danced and pleaſed Herod." Very true; and by ſo doing was the cauſe of one of the greateſt murders ever committed

mitted on earth. But would good Mr. Davis ſeriouſly propoſe the dancing of a ſtrumpet, before a debauched and an adulterous king, as an example for our imitation! that is, would he wiſh the Methodiſt-matrons to teach their daughters to dance as the daughter of Herodias did, who "Tripped on the toe, in a moſt im-"modeſt manner, ſays Mr. Trapp, as they "uſed to do in their Bacchanals?" I know Mr. Davis would ſhudder at the thought; and, therefore, I wonder at his quoting this inſtance.

Again, he ſays, Luke xv. 25. mentions the "return of the prodigal ſon celebrated "in his father's houſe with muſic και χορῶν "and dancing." On this paſſage I obſerve, firſt, that the whole ſtory is a mere parable, as every one knows: ſecondly, that in all parables a great variety of circumſtances are introduced, only for the ſake of making the narrative complete; and, thirdly, that for this purpoſe inſtances are ſometimes introduced, for wiſe and moral purpoſes, which, in themſelves, are unwiſe and immoral. Take one inſtance. The Lord is ſaid to commend the unjuſt ſteward. Now would not Mr. Davis ſhudder if he heard any one recommend

recommend injuſtice, becauſe the Lord is ſaid to commend it? And yet there is better reaſon for ſo doing, than for recommending dancing from what is ſaid in this parable; ſeeing it is not, either here, or any where elſe in the Bible ſaid, the Lord commended dancers or dancings.

"But there is a paſſage, ſays Mr. Davis, "in Acts iii. 8. which I wiſh to be particu- "larly noticed; becauſe I really think it "militates in favour of all that I have ſaid "concerning dancing, as an innocent ex- "preſſion of joy, and even allowable, in "ſome circumſtances, in religious wor- "ſhip." One would think from the manner in which this paſſage is introduced, that Mr. Davis had his grand argument in reſerve, which was to give ſtrength and weight to all the reſt; but in my opinion it is ſo far from that, that it is the weakeſt of all. However, let us ſee what it is.

Page 18, "The impotent man, ſays Mr. "Davis, who had never walked, being mi- "raculouſly endued with ſtrength in his "limbs by Peter, in the name of Jeſus "Chriſt, *leaped up* from the ground where "he had lain, *ſtood and walked*, and his "loving grateful heart urging him pub- "licly

"licly to acknowledge the ineſtimable fa-
"vour received, he entered into the Tem-
"ple with Peter and John not only *walking*,
"but *leaping and praiſing God.*" On this
"paſſage I obſerve, firſt, that the impotent man is ſaid to be ſo lame from his mother's womb that he was carried wherever he went; of conſequence he never could be under the tuition of a dancing-maſter. Secondly, that when he was reſtored, he leaped up, ſtood, and walked, and entered into the Temple walking, leaping and praiſing God. Now Mr. Davis endeavours to prove, from a deal of Greek and Hebrew criticiſm, that the leaping here ſpoken of ſignifies dancing. For this purpoſe he ſays, "The Greek "verb αλλομαι ſalio, I leap or jump, from "which the participles αλλομενος leaping, "and εξαλλομενος leaping up, are formed, "comes from the Hebrew verb חלל, chalal, "ſaltare, tripudiare, to leap, to dance, to "ſkip along." To this I anſwer, Suppoſe the Greek and Hebrew words may be rendered, leaping, jumping, dancing, ſkipping, Mr. Davis knows that every interpreter, commentator, &c. ought to chuſe that term which beſt agrees with the ſubject under conſideration, and not that which

does not agree with it at all. But the terms, walking, and leaping, beſt agree with the lame man, entering into the Temple in a joyous manner, immediately after receiving ſo miraculous a cure: and therefore our tranſlators muſt be in the right in rendering the words, walking and leaping, and praiſing God.

But ſuppoſe they had rendered them, walking and dancing, &c. I ſhould be glad to know what ſort of dancing it was; whether artificial, or inartificial? If it was artificial, conſiſting of minuets, jigs, hornpipes or country-dances, I ſhall be glad to know, firſt, who was the dancing-maſter that taught him? and, ſecondly, who were his partners! Surely good Mr. Davis will not ſay that Peter and John were either the one or the other! Though they were the only perſons we have any account of, who ſpake to him, took him by the hand, lifted him up, and walked with him into the temple.

If it was inartificial dancing, conſiſting of leaping, jumping or ſkipping, then it is nothing to the purpoſe, as we have no diſpute with Mr. Davis on that head. For we allow in all our ſchools what are called play-

play-grounds, where the children are permitted to leap, ſkip, and jump, to exerciſe their limbs, unbend their minds, and preſerve their health and vigour of ſpirit.

I have now done with Mr. Davis' Scriptural account of dancing, and ſhould be ſorry to ſee ſo much Greek and Hebrew criticiſm employed on ſo paltry a ſubject (very little of which is at all to the purpoſe) if I did not hope that it will convince his friends and the public that he is well qualified to inſtruct youth in the learned languages. And I muſt beg leave to ſay, that I am ſo fully ſatisfied concerning his abilities and care in every reſpect, that I ſhould count it a privilege to have a ſon under his tuition in all things, his dancing only excepted.

Page 19. Mr. Davis next proceeds to ſhew the great advantages of learning to dance. To this end he obſerves, Secondly, that "Dancing may be conſidered as an "art whereby we are taught good carriage, "a graceful and eaſy way of moving our "limbs, and a genteel manner of addreſs." I anſwer, Theſe may be learned without the help of a dancing-maſter; inſtance, multitudes of the rich Quakers, both male

and female. For though theſe hold dancing in abomination, yet it is a fact that thouſands of them have as good a carriage, as graceful and eaſy a way of moving their limbs, and as genteel a manner of addreſs, as any who have ſpent much time and money under the inſtruction of a dancing-maſter.

Ibid. "But a bad carriage (Mr. Davis means, a carriage which is not improved by a dancing-maſter) is very hurtful to health." If ſo, what an unhealthy body of people muſt the bulk of mankind be: particularly the farmers, with their children and ſervants! With regard to health, I muſt beg leave to obſerve further, that for every ſingle perſon who has ſuffered in his health, for want of learning to dance, there have been thouſands who have loſt both health and life together by means of dancing.

But "Many children, ſays Mr. Davis, "particularly females, grow up deformed "through our inattention to their carriage "in early infancy." I anſwer, there are fewer inſtances, in proportion to the numbers, of deformed perſons among the common people, who never learned artificial dancing,

dancing, than among thoſe who have had the moſt finiſhed education.

"But they contract ungraceful, aukward "habits of ſitting, ſtanding and walking." To this I anſwer, who ſtand or walk with more gracefulneſs and accuracy than the common ſoldiers in our marching regiments? Who ſtand more exact? Who uſe their hands, arms, legs and feet with more exact propriety? and yet, though they were aukward and clowniſh to the laſt degree, till they were even grown up to manhood; with only the inſtruction of a corporal and a ſerjeant, who themſelves were abſolute clowns a very few years before, all their aukwardneſs and clowniſhneſs is perfectly removed. Now I ſhould have a very poor opinion of maſters or miſtreſſes of boarding-ſchools who could not do as much, by precepts and examples, as a ſerjeant and corporal can ſo expeditiouſly do for a number of clowniſh recruits.

Page 20. "But the man called a dancing-"maſter can teach theſe things ſooner and "better." I deny this. A ſerjeant or a corporal can teach them full as well, and in a much ſhorter time, than the moſt accompliſhed dancing-maſter in the world:

and no wonder, ſeeing the dancing-maſter muſt attend to the particular bows, ſcrapes, ſteps and capers of his different dances; while the ſerjeant or corporal attends only to what is eſſential to the buſineſs in hand: which would be the ſame did maſters and miſtreſſes of boarding-ſchools undertake, by precepts and example, to teach their ſcholars a graceful attitude and action.

"But it may be objected, ſays Mr. Davis, "this is teaching them to dance; and when "they grow up they will frequent balls and "aſſemblies, and in theſe places gratify all "the vanity and luſt of their heart, throw "away their money and time, form bad "connexions, and ruin themſelves probably "in this world and in the next." To this I anſwer in general, that there is more danger of theſe conſequences by learning to dance, than there would be in not learning it; for certainly there have been many inſtances of theſe evils following the learning to dance; but not one that I ever heard of where perſons did not learn it, and *becauſe* they did not learn it.

To this Mr. Davis replies. "It is not "true in fact, that all young people who "have learned to dance thus abuſe this part "of

"of their education." I anſwer; to follow the moſt direct and moſt natural tendency of what we are taught, cannot be called an *abuſe* of it, whether the thing itſelf be good or evil. Now the moſt direct and natural tendency of learning to dance when children, is, that they follow it when grown up to maturity, by going to balls and aſſemblies, and by that means gratify all the vanity and luſt of their hearts. "But perhaps, ſays Mr. Davis, not one in ten is "very fond of the amuſement, even of thoſe "whoſe parents think it neither criminal nor "dangerous." (a word to the wiſe!) "that "their children ſhould occaſionally attend "balls, aſſemblies, &c." I believe it will be found on enquiry that nineteen out of twenty of thoſe who have learned to dance, as well as of thoſe who are now learning, are very fond of the amuſement: and for the truth of this I appeal to the feelings of the young people themſelves, and alſo to the obſervations of their tutors and parents, and of thoſe who are conſtantly about them.

Mr. Davis goes on, "If when your ſon "grows up to manhood, he unhappily becomes "extravagantly fond of dancing, he will pur-"ſue the amuſement for ſome time, whether

"or no he was taught in his childhood." If he becomes extravagantly fond of dancing without being initiated into it by his parents, whatever the conſequence may be, they are clear; but if it be owing to any inſtruction or encouragement they afforded him in his childhood, the blame will primarily and principally fall on them.

Page 21. Mr. Davis ſays, "You have "had your child taught to read, and you "wiſh him or her to contract a fondneſs for "reading. You are at laſt gratified in "your wiſh. But the only books your ſon "will read are the looſeſt novels and plays "which he can lay his hands on; or thoſe "artful metaphyſical treatiſes which have "been publiſhed againſt chriſtianity by "men who are free-thinkers, becauſe they "would be free-livers. Was it wrong to "have had theſe childreen taught reading "in their childhood, becauſe they now "make a bad uſe of the education they "then received?" I anſwer, the caſe is in nowiſe parallel. For reading is one of the moſt excellent and uſeful accompliſhments any parent can give his ſon; and whether the ſon makes a right or wrong uſe of it, the parent is to be commended for having performed

performed a moſt neceſſary duty towards his child: if therefore the ſon abuſes the benefit, he only is to blame. For inſtance. If a parent puts a pious book into the hands of his ſon, that he may improve by it in the knowledge of religion, the parent is to be highly commended for what he has done; but if the ſon throws it into the fire he only is blame-worthy. But this cannot be ſaid of dancing; ſeeing, as I have ſhewn above, it is, in itſelf, an unneceſſary qualification, and ſeeing the evils attendant on it are not abuſes thereof; but follow almoſt of unavoidable conſequence: ſo that the parent is the original cauſe of them all.

Page 22. Mr. Davis tells us that "Mr. "Weſley many years back, made rules "concerning tea, tobacco, ſnuff, dreſs, "&c. which he found by experience, "too minute, and too frivolous, to be "executed with rigour—he therefore ra-"ther recommended than enforced his "rules." The rules Mr. Davis ſpeaks of, if I miſtake not, are what we call the Band-rules; and when Mr. Weſley forbade tea, tobacco, &c. to the Band-Society, it was with this limitation, "Unleſs preſcribed by a phyſician." Accordingly many left off

theſe

theſe till they were adviſed to take them again, in order to prevent the conſequence of breaking off long habits. Take one inſtance among many. Mr. J. G. who had for many years taken ſnuff, threw away his box; but was forced to take it again to prevent his growing ſtone blind. But what are ſnuff and tobacco compared to dancing? ſeeing theſe, at the very moſt, are only private and inſignificant amuſements, while dancing opens the door to the moſt public and dangerous follies of life.

Ibid. "But he [Mr. Weſley] never ven-"tured to make any rule or law condemning "dancing." Here, at leaſt, my old friend is under a great miſtake. For in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, in the year 1785, we have theſe words;

"Queſt. 24. Is it right to ſend our chil-"dren to a dancing-ſchool?

"Anſ. It is entirely wrong. Neither do "we think it right for any that keep board-"ing-ſchools to admit a dancing-maſter "into their houſe." By this minute Mr. Davis ſees, that "making laws for the exclu-"ſion of dancing-maſters was not wholly "left to Mr. Weſley's wiſer and more zea-"lous ſucceſſors to accompliſh."

As

As for Mr. Davis' hear-ſay ſtories concerning Mr. Weſley's telling the married women, "I have no objection againſt your "daughters being taught carriage, addreſs, "and even to dance a minuet," I have nothing to ſay; but ſure I am that in the year 1785 both he and his brethren in Conference made a rule or law againſt it: at leaſt, againſt their being taught ſo to do by a dancing-maſter, while at a boarding-ſchool. And the ſame anſwer will ſuffice concerning what he heard of employing a dancing-maſter in Kingſwood-School, to give the boys an outward poliſh: only I muſt add, that there never were any of theſe gentry employed in that ſchool from the firſt erection of it, to the preſent day.

But "The natural tendency of ſuch rules "is, eſpecially when they are concerning "things of an indifferent or doubtful nature "in morals, rather to give offence than to "do good." To this I anſwer, that the things now under conſideration were not of an indifferent or doubtful nature to Mr. Weſley and the Conference, in the year 1785, nor to the late Conference in 1791, however indifferent and doubtful they may now appear to Mr. Davis and others.

"While

"While the religion of the heart, ſays "Mr. Davis, is preached and practiſed "among us—while our preachers are men "of piety, chriſtian zeal and prudence;— "while the doctrine of Jeſus our Saviour, and "the life of Jeſus our pattern are inculcated "upon us; we ſhall hardly be troubled with "perſons in our connexion who notoriouſly "deviate from the chriſtian character." I anſwer, Though we have reaſon to bleſs God that all theſe helps are ſtill found among us; yet every one feels in himſelf, and ſees in thoſe about him, that in order to preſerve our purity, and to keep us from conformity to the vanities of the world, we need every other help, both human and divine. Hence all well-regulated communities, beſides the doctrines of the goſpel, and the holy example of Jeſus, have had rules, laws and canons to regulate and guard the conduct of their members.

Page 23. But theſe Mr. Davis calls "Abſurd, narrow and ſuperſtitious laws or "rules, by which miſtaken zeal has at-"attempted to explain and enforce the ex-"cellent general precepts of God's word." I allow this has too often been the caſe: but

it

it does not follow that it is ſo in that now under conſideration. The excluding of dancing and dancing-maſters from a religious body of people, who for upwards of fifty years have been crying out, night and day, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," is ſcriptural, rational, and conſiſtent.

But Mr. Davis tells us in his preface, page 4, That he hoped this law would "ſleep reſpecting execution," as do many of the laws of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Quakers. See page 24. I anſwer, If a law was made to ſleep, reſpecting execution, had it not better never been made at all? unleſs good Mr. Davis will ſay (what I know he will not) that it was only intended for a bugbear to frighten the Methodiſts from employing too many dancing-maſters! But if we were to make laws, and then ſuffer them to ſleep as to execution, would not this ſleeping in a ſhort time be as fatal to us, in things of a ſpiritual nature, and be a cauſe of as deep lamentation, as it is to the moſt pious members of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Quakers?

kers? To prevent this, let the Methodiſts make wholeſome laws, and then put them into execution, and by ſo doing keep both their laws and themſelves awake.

"But what is worſt of all; ſays Mr. "Davis, page 24, ſome I fear, of our oldeſt "and beſt preachers are ſometimes found "with ſuch a pinch of ſnuff in their fingers "as would make me ſneeze for half an "hour; or with a pipe of tobacco be- "tween their broken teeth, as would ſend "me to bed ſick and lightheaded; and, "moreover, if I am not wrongly informed, "ſome great men among us drink their "brandy and water ſo ſtrong as would make "me, who am nearſighted, ſee double; and "others can ſwallow down a whole pint of "porter, which would really ſet me ſo faſt "aſleep that I ſhould not be able to ſee at "all, and yet theſe are ſuffered to preach "uſeful ſermons although guilty of ſuch "peccadillos." I am glad Mr. Davis has ſhewn his wonted candour on this occaſion, by calling theſe by ſo ſoft a name, as peccadillos; and am really ſorry that truth and juſtice forbid my calling his dancing by ſo ſoft a name.

But

But leſt ſome of his readers ſhould not be ſo candid as to call them peccadillos, I muſt beg leave to make a few obſervations on the particulars he has mentioned.

And, firſt, as to ſnuff; I have obſerved above that many who had long accuſtomed themſelves to take it, before their converſion, and had left it off in obedience to the rule, were obliged to take it again to prevent dangerous conſequences to their heads and eyes. As to tobacco, "A guilty conſcience needs no accuſer;" therefore I am obliged to confeſs that I am guilty of holding a pipe of tobacco between my "broken teeth." And if my old friend Mr. Davis ſhould really intend me, I thank him for his candour in mentioning only this peccadillo, after all the weakneſſes and imperfections he muſt have known in me in the long courſe of between thirty and forty years.

But as to this, it may be neceſſary to obſerve, that after the ſmall pox, I had a violent tickling cough, with a large diſcharge of acid water, which nothing could prevent till I tried the ſmoak of tobacco; which ſcarce ever failed giving me preſent relief. And when I have tried to leave it off, my

complaint returned with nearly the ſame violence I experienced forty years ago, ſo that I was obliged to reſume it again. My ſmoaking then, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is no violation of any rule of the Methodiſt-Society: and if any of my brethren ſmoak, without any ſuch neceſſity, let them fall under Mr. Davis' cenſure; but I cannot ſay I ever knew one.

As to any thing that bears the ſmalleſt reſemblance to exceſſive drinking, I thank God I am clear; for I never drank, at one time (I mean, at one ſitting, &c.) ſo much as a ſingle pint, either of porter, cyder or ale; no, nor one glaſs of rum, brandy or gin, except a ſingle glaſs of brandy which I once threw down in a hurry, miſtaking it for white wine, which I ſoon mixed with about a pint of cold water to prevent the bad conſequences thereof: ſo that it is no wonder that I was never any more drunk in all my life than I was the firſt hour I was born.

And as to my brethren, I ſolemnly declare before God, that though I have been intimately acquainted with them for upwards of forty years, I never ſaw any of them, who ſhewed the leaſt ſign of immoderate drinking, except a ſingle feeble old

old man, who ſeemed to be a little, and but very little, overcome by the ſtrength of liquor, diſguiſed by ſweetneſs, which he drank in a warm room after travelling in a very cold winter day. And if others have ſeen more, perhaps one or two in the courſe of eight or ten years, they have always been reproved, ſuſpended or ſilenced according as their crime deſerved. It would therefore be unkind and unjuſt if any ſhould ſo far miſconſtrue Mr. Davis' words, as if he inſinuated that this holy and uſeful body of men were intemperate; ſeeing all he intends is, that they are inconſiſtent in laying ſuch a ſtreſs on dancing, while they allow themſelves in peccadillos equally trivial.

Page 25. Mr. Davis ſays, "You will obſerve, brethren, I do not mean by any "thing I have ſaid to encourage or defend "the practice of frequenting balls, aſſem-"blies, &c. I know, from the experience "of my youth, how dangerous ſuch enter-"tainments are for young minds." I wonder then he does not ſee that whatever has any tendency towards it muſt be of dangerous conſequence, and that learning to dance in childhood has this tendency.

I allow there are many things which may be learned in childhood, ſuch as thoſe which are coarſe, laborious and diſagreeable, which have no natural tendency to cauſe us to follow them in after-life; but if they are matters of mere amuſement, which afford pleaſure, the caſe is widely different. Now dancing is of this ſort; therefore learning it in our childhood muſt give us a propenſity to it when grown up to years of maturity.

Ibid. Mr. Davis ſays, "Many parents "likewiſe, who are not only good friends "to the Methodiſts, but alſo in our con- "nexion, being neither convinced nor ſof- "tened by the knock-down arguments of "a threatened excluſion, will perſiſt in "having their children taught by a danc- "ing-maſter, carriage, addreſs, &c." I anſwer, perhaps they may. But then it muſt be remembered, that many parents among us are now grown rich; and it will be well if the conſciences of ſome of theſe are not grown leſs ſqueamiſh, that is, leſs tender; and therefore, though Mr. Davis may only intend the proſperity of his ſchool, and his own convenience, yet his arguments and eloquence may have ſuch weight with theſe as to cauſe them to ſtand out ſtifly

againſt

againſt the more wholeſome admonitions of their teachers. But as to theſe, there cannot be "many," ſeeing ninety-nine out of every hundred of our people hold dancing, and all other vain amuſements, in as great contempt as ever.

Page 26. Mr. Davis ſays, "With regard "to ſchool-maſters and ſchool-miſtreſſes in "the Methodiſt connexion, they are indeed "in a ſingular predicament. The few of "whom I have any knowledge have not a "third, perhaps not a fourth part of their "ſcholars, from among the people called "Methodiſts." This I am inclined to think is very true; for which I am ſorry. And I am the more ſo, becauſe I know that the Methodiſts and their religious acquaintance are now ſo numerous, that if they exerted themſelves as they ought, our ſchool-maſters and ſchool-miſtreſſes would have plenty of ſcholars without applying to people who have no fear of God themſelves, nor pay any regard to religion in the education of their children. But if any of the wealthy Methodiſts ſhould be ſo loſt to all prudence, as to ſend their children to ſchools, where carriage, addreſs, dancing, and other faſhionable amuſements are taught in preference

preference to religion, it is a dreadful ſign that they know but little of the duties of parents, that they have but a ſmall regard for the eternal intereſt of their children, and that they are very far from loving their chriſtian-brethren as they ought. And as to teaching children carriage, addreſs, &c. no man need be aſhamed of his ſon's behaviour in any company, or on any occaſion, whatever his fortune or future ſituation in life may be, after having paſſed under the hands of Mr. Davis, Mr. Hulett and others, without the impertinent and ſupercilious aid of a dancing-maſter.

Ibid. "Of the many who have been under "the tuition of a dancing-maſter in my "houſe, I do not know that even one has "abuſed this part of his youthful education, "by throwing away his money and time in "frequenting places of public amuſement "for the purpoſe of dancing." I anſwer, They might do this frequently without its coming to Mr. Davis' ears: eſpecially as theſe things are often done in ſecret, even without the knowledge of parents: add to this, that many of Mr. Davis' ſcholars live in London, while he himſelf lives ſix or eight

eight miles off in the country. But ſuppoſe they have been kept from dancings and other public amuſements, there is no thanks due to thoſe who qualified them for ſuch practices, and thereby were the authors of ſuch evil propenſities as might have led them aſtray.

Page 27. But he ſays he knew "Two or "three who were not taught dancing when "children in my houſe, acknowledge, that "they procured inſtruction, in their appren-"ticeſhip at a conſiderable expence, and "that with no ſmall injury to their mind "and morals." From this account we learn, firſt, that ſome children who are not allowed to dance at ſchool, yet have a ſtrong propenſity to it, otherwiſe they would not afterward be ſo eager to procure inſtruction for themſelves: which demonſtrate that dancing is not ſuch an indifferent thing to children, as has been above hinted, and that all they want is only to learn thereby how to ſtand and move on all common occaſions. Secondly, I obſerve, that learning to dance may be hurtful to youth, both in their mind and morals; which is evident from their own confeſſion to Mr. Davis. I apprehend it will make no difference whether

ther they were taught at ſchool by maſters of their parent's chuſing, or by thoſe they afterwards choſe for themſelves; ſeeing, according to their own confeſſion, it was not ſo much the maſter who hurted them, as their following their own evil propenſities. Beſides, the youth who does not indulge his dancing-propenſity till in his apprenticeſhip, is ſaved from that indulgence till about fourteen years of age; but he who learns it at ſchool, begins the indulgence by the time he is five or ſix years old: which, beſides the loſs of ſo much time, the young practitioner gets his evil propenſities more deeply rooted, and, on all occaſions, ſhews himſelf a great adept when grown up to manhood.

Having finiſhed the argumentative part of his book, Mr. Davis proceeds to ſum up the evidence, which he ſays he will do as faithfully, and in as few words as he poſſibly can.

And, 1. He ſays, "Dancing viewed as "geſtures of nature, expreſſive of our paſ- "ſions, muſt be as innocent, abſtractedly "conſidered, as laughing, crying, talking, or "walking." This may be true if by geſtures of nature he means, leaping, jumping, ſkipping,

ping, &c. ſuppoſe they are done at a proper time, and in a proper manner. But if by geſtures of nature he means artificial dancing, the contrary, I truſt, has been proved above.

Ibid. "I ſhould never reproach a child, "or a grown perſon, with either ſin or folly "who jumped for joy, as we commonly ex- "preſs it; on receiving a favour, or hearing "good news." I anſwer, I know not who does: certainly the Methodiſts do not.

Again Mr. Davis ſays, "The fact is, na- "ture will ſometimes break through all "the reſtraint of what we call human pru- "dence and decorum, and yet no ſin is "committed." What the Methodiſts call human prudence, in the good ſenſe of the word, is that which reſtrains theſe vicious exertions of nature; how then can nature break through all theſe reſtraints without committing ſin? Beſides, are they theſe violent exertions of nature, breaking through all the bounds of human prudence and decorum, which cauſe Mr. Davis's ſcholars to wiſh to learn dancing? if ſo, the learning thereof cannot be a very amiable or deſirable accompliſhment.

Page 28. "2. Dancing, continues Mr. "Davis, is frequently mentioned in Scrip- "ture, as an innocent expreſſion of joy." Leaping, jumping and ſkipping are; but not artificial dancing, ſuch as is taught by dancing-maſters, which is the only dancing now in debate.

"But it is recorded there (in the Scrip- "tures) as an eſtabliſhed mode of religious "worſhip among the Jews." Does good Mr. Davis aſſert this! What a proof have we here, that a wiſe and good man may be ſometimes off his guard? If it is recorded in Scripture that dancing was an eſtabliſhed mode of worſhip among the Jews, let thoſe records be produced and I will believe them; but certain I am there are no ſuch records in all the Bible. But it "was practiſed even by ſome of the firſt converts to Chriſtianity; Acts iii. 8. Acts xiv. 10" To this I anſwer, theſe paſſages refer only to the two impotent men, who on receiving miraculous cures, one is ſaid to leap and walk, and the other to leap up, ſtand and walk, and to enter the temple praiſing God. And are theſe all the inſtances Mr. Davis could find among the firſt converts to Chriſtianity! "But it has been practiſed, "according

"according to hiſtory, both by individuals "and chriſtian-congregations, on certain oc- "caſions." I anſwer, I do not remember that Mr. Davis has given us an account of any individuals, except the two impotent men juſt mentioned, who were dancers among the Chriſtians of former ages; but in page 13, he has produced an inſtance from biſhop Patrick of congregations who danced. "The Abyſſinians (ſaid the good "biſhop from Ludolphi Hiſtoria Æthiopica) "meet together in their churches on the eve "of our Lord's reſurrection, and employ "the whole night in ſinging, dancing and "clapping their hands, accompanied by "ſeveral inſtruments of muſic, till morning "light." And Mr. Davis might have added that they did this, or ſomething like it, on various other occaſions. For Ludolphus tells us that "On their January 11th, which is the midſt of their ſummer, and at the feaſt of Epiphany, they commemorated our Saviour's baptiſm with hymns:" that then "the king with all his "nobility, the metropolitant with his cler- "gy, the nobles with the plebians, old and "young, throwing themſelves into rivers "and ponds, before ſun-riſing, plunging

"and diving over head, &c." But this is turned into a kind of ſport, ſays the ſame hiſtorian, rather than a pious feſtival; the young men "leaping, and dancing, and "ſwimming, and ducking one another, and "filling the neighbouring fields with whoop-"ing and hollowing." Ludolphus adds, "They have ſinging prieſts, with very harſh "voices; uſe cymbals, morris-bells, kettle-"drums; ſkipping and dancing, as if they "would make the floor ring again, which "they call, exulting and clapping hands to "the God of Iſrael." Moreover it is well known that they circumciſe their children, pray for the dead, and uſe many other ſuperſtitious and ridiculous cuſtoms which Mr. Davis himſelf would be ſorry to ſee brought in among the Methodiſts. The authority of the Abyſſinians, therefore, can have but little influence in the preſent caſe; eſpecially as we have a great number of ſuperior authorities to produce againſt it.

The Primitive Fathers ſpoke of dancing as a moſt attrocious and ſcandalous evil; ſo St. Ambroſe: "None may dance but the "daughter of an adultereſs; but ſhe who is "chaſte, let her learn her daughter prayer, "not dances." Again, ſaith he, "What "modeſty

"modeſty can there be where dancers ſhriek "and make a noiſe together?

St. Hieron ſaith, "Where the timbrels "ſound, the pipe makes a noiſe, the harp "chatters, the cymbals ſtrike together, what "fear of God can there be?" Hieron. lib. contr. Helvid.

St. Chryſoſtom ſaith, "Where wanton "dancing is, there certainly the devil is "preſent; for God hath not given us legs "to dance, but that we ſhould walk mo- "deſtly; not ſkip like camels; but if the "body be polluted by dancing impudently, "how much more may the ſoul be thought "to be defiled? The devil danceth in theſe "dances." See Hom. 49, on Matt.

St. Baſil ſaith, "Men and women toge- "ther, entering into common dances, hav- "ing delivered their ſouls to the drunken "devil, wound one another with the pricks "of unchaſte affections: profuſe laughter is "cheriſhed, and filthy ſongs, meretricious "habits inviting unto petulency are there "uſed. Laugheſt thou, and delighteſt thou "thyſelf with an arrogant delight, whereas "thou oughteſt to pour out tears and ſighs "for what is paſt—Doſt thou ſtir thy feet "and caper furiouſly, and dance unhappily,

"whereas thou oughteſt to bend thy knees "in prayer." See Orat. contr. Ebr.

St. Auguſtine ſaith, "Every caper in a "dance is a ſtep into a deep jakes."

Beſides theſe we have large accounts of dancing being condemned and prohibited by councils and ſynods in former ages.

In the council of Laodica it was decreed that "Chriſtians ſhould not go to weddings, "&c. (habare vel ſaltare) bleat or dance; "but ſup or dine chaſtely as become Chriſ- "tians." See c. 52.

The univerſal council of Conſtantinople, &c. forbid dancing, eſpecially at weddings, Alſted.

Beſides theſe, dancing has been condemned by a great number of other councils, &c. Take a liſt of them in the words of a late learned writer. It was condemned, he informs us, "In concilia Choreas dam- "nant, ut Baſilienſe, Carthaginenſe, quartum; "Agathenſe, &c. & Decreta prohibent: lege "inſtitutum Zachariæ cauſ. 26. can. Siquis, "&c. De Conciliis lege diſtinct. 34. can. "Preſbyteri, & de conſecratione diſt. 1. can. "Qui die. & de Conſ. diſt. 5. can. Non "Oportet. Steph. Tzeged Loc. commun, "p. 438. who quotes alſo St. Auguſtine "contra

" contra Petilianum, c. 6, & S. Chryſoſtom,
" Hom. 56. ſup. Geneſ. and in Matt. 14,
" &c. Marlorat in Matth. c. 14. Calvin in
" Matth. 14, &c. Tzegedine alſo cites
" againſt dancing the Councils of Laodicea,
" Agath. Ilerdian, Altiſiodore. Beſides
" Canons (de quibus cauſ. 26. q. 7. can.
" Siquiſ. Alſo lib. 3. Decr. Gregorii can.
" cum decorem, &c. & lib. 3. Clementinarum.
" Tit. 14. c. 1.) as alſo Philoſophers, Plato in
" Protagor. l. 17. Cicero pro Murenà,
" Aimilii Probi in vit. Epaminonde; and in
" another table, Peter Martyr, Eraſmus,
" Pellican, Calvin, Ariſtotle, Seneca, Ma-
" crobius, Salluſtius, Plautus, Polux, &c.
" Pope Clement the 5th, Innocent the 3d,
" &c." To theſe I ſhall add a few more of thoſe Chriſtians who bore teſtimony againſt dancing.

The ancient Waldenſes, it is ſaid, make dancing to be a breach of the Ten Commandments.

Angel. de Clavaſio is full upon the point. Quem. vide, page 55, where he makes dancing a mortal ſin.

Cardinal Bellarmine enveighs very bitterly againſt it, and cites the authorities both of the Greek and Latin Fathers as on his ſide. Con. 6. 3. 19, 20, 21.

The titular Biſhop of Geneva, (S. Fr. Sales) is very ſevere, but at laſt concludes that they [dancings] are like muſhrooms, the beſt are bad and dangerous, at leaſt nothing worth. See Sale's Introd.

Cardinal Barrowmeus ſaith, when he was a young man at the Univerſity, he and his companions prevailed with one of their profeſſors, a grave young man, to go with them to a ball, who having obſerved—&c. told them, It was an invention of the devil to deſtroy ſouls. See Author of the Educa. of a young Gentleman.

M. de Rhodez ſaith, Nothing doth more diſſipate the ſpirits than the raviſhing harmony, dancing, and charms of women.—Doubtleſs it was a conviction of this which cauſed Cicero, long before to ſay, as I have obſerved in the title-page, Nemo ſobrius ſaltat. No modeſt man danceth.

I have only to add what Mr. Chambers ſays, viz. That Cicero reproached Gabinius on account of dancing; that Tiberius expelled the dancers out of Rome; and that Domitian excluded ſeveral members from the Senate for having danced. See Chambers' Cyclopædie.

But

But "it [dancing] ſeems, indeed, ſays "Mr. Davis, ſo nearly allied to muſic, both "vocal and inſtrumental, that the arguments "which are ſufficient to juſtify the practice "of the latter, will alſo juſtify the practice "of the former." I anſwer; Muſic has always been a very material part of the worſhip of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian Churches, and is repreſented in Scripture as one of the moſt principal parts of the employment of heaven; but nothing of this ſort is ſaid of dancing: therefore the arguments which are uſed to juſtify the practice of muſic, will not juſtify the practice of dancing.

Again. "There can be no ſin in having "our children taught an erect carriage, a "graceful and eaſy way of moving their "limbs, and a genteel manner of addreſs." Anſwer. If they cannot be taught theſe but by ſinful or fooliſh means, there is, and muſt be ſin in the caſe; ſeeing this would be "doing evil that good might come." But this notion of learning to dance, for no other purpoſe but to acquire an erect carriage, I fear is only the gilding of the pill. But is it not very extraordinary that this ſhould not be found out but by a few of *us!* for I do not remember that ſuch a thing is once mentioned

mentioned by any other author, either ancient or modern.

Again. "If the man called a dancing-"maſter can teach theſe things ſooner and "better than any other perſon, he is the "moſt proper man to be employed on the "occaſion." I anſwer; he cannot teach them ſooner or better than any other perſon: a ſerjeant or a corporal can teach a company of abſolute clowns to ſtand erect, &c. much ſooner than a dancing-maſter can teach a like number of docile children. And the ſerjeant or corporal can teach them much better: for one of theſe can teach his aukward pupils to ſtand erect, &c. without farther aſſiſtance, which the dancing-maſter cannot do; for every one knows, if it was not for the daily and hourly inſtructions which children receive from their maſters or miſtreſſes at ſchool, and alſo from their parents at home, all the ſcrapings, bowings and caperings of a dancing-maſter, for an hour or two in a week, would go but a little way.

Mr. Davis goes on. "If experience aſ-"ſures us, that muſic greatly aſſiſts both in "giving and receiving his inſtructions, the "uſe of muſic cannot be prohibited."

Whatever

Whatever uſe muſic may be of in learning to dance minuets, &c. the common ſoldiers in a marching regiment, the genteel Quakers, and thouſands beſides, ſhew that it is not neceſſary in order to a good carriage. Beſides, I cannot ſee what need there is of muſic in order to teach a child, or a grown perſon to ſtand erect, to adjuſt the different members of his body, to turn upon the heel, to open or ſhut a door, or to make a bow or a curtſey: if I am not much miſtaken, the brayings of an aſs, or the ſqualls of a parrot, are as much connected with theſe, as the ſounds of the flute or the violin.

Ibid. Mr. Davis adds, "The expediency "of having children thus taught appears in "their carriage and behaviour, and after in the "degree of health and vigour they enjoy." I anſwer; The expediency of it does not appear in their carriage and behaviour; ſeeing theſe may be acquired a much eaſier, cheaper, more effectual, and leſs dangerous way: and as to health and vigour, theſe may be acquired, and increaſed by the exerciſe of the play-ground, &c. without dancing; as is evident from the health and vigour of thouſands of children who never learned to dance.

Page 29. "I therefore ſincerely wiſh, "continues Mr. Davis, that our brethren in "Conference had not taken up the ſubject: "or, at leaſt, had not ventured to deter- "mine ſo deciſively and ſo authoritatively "concerning it." See "how doctors dif- fer!" For when I ſaw the minute of Con- ference I very much rejoiced at the zeal and piety of the preachers, in determining ſo de- cidedly on the ſubject, in their firſt meeting after Mr. Weſley's deceaſe: and this I did as an impartial perſon, who had nothing either to gain or loſe by the determination, which ever way it went. But I am ſorry to ſay, the caſe of my friend is quite different: he is the maſter of a boarding-ſchool, and has long found, or at leaſt thought it neceſſary to have dancing taught, not doubting of its innocency: it is therefore no wonder if he views the conduct of Conference, in this particular, in an unfavourable light; and that he ſhould add, "I ſhall be extremely "ſorry, if they attempt to execute their rule "with rigour." If by rigour he means, with any unkindneſs, or want of brotherly love towards any concerned, I alſo ſhall be very ſorry; but if by rigour he means, enforcing it without favour or affection, I expect

expect he will have cauſe for extreme ſorrow; for why ſhould they ſo very formally make a rule, if they did not intend to enforce it?

Page 30, Mr. Davis ſays, "I wiſh them "to keep at a diſtance as well from ſuper-"ſtition as from ſin." I am inclined to think, that before he was a ſchool-maſter he did not view prohibitions of this ſort in the light of ſuperſtition; but to this day, the Methodiſts look upon dancing, &c. as conformity to the world; and all rules which forbid it as moſt ſcriptural and neceſſary duties.

But he ſays he wiſhes the preachers "to "ſpend their zeal and their ſtrength on the "weightier matters of God's law." Certainly, this is quite right. But Mr. Davis knows that while we are doing this, we muſt not leave the others undone, Matt. xiii. 13. But let us ſuppoſe, for argument-ſake, that dancing is a little thing, does he not know that the little foxes will ruin the vine? Cant. ii. 15. and that he that contemneth ſmall things, ſhall fall by little and little? Eccleſ. xix. 1.

Mr. Davis wiſhesfarther that the preachers may "evidence by the whole of their "miniſtry

" miniſtry and proceedings, that they have " paſſed their novitiate ſtate, both in the " ſchool of Chriſt, and in the world." And does Mr. Davis really think that making rules to exclude dancing from among the Methodiſts is a ſign that thoſe who made them are in a novitiate ſtate? What a novice then was good Mr. Weſley, who was the firſt framer of that rule in 1785. and what novices muſt ſeveral of the preachers be, after labouring with him, ſome for thirty, ſome for forty, and ſome for about fifty years! Now if theſe give no greater proof of a novitiate ſtate, than making and enforcing rules againſt dancing, few, very few will be prevailed on to look on them as a company of novices.

Mr. Davis ſays next, " If they act con- " ſiſtently, they will alſo drop the names " of half a dozen ſchool-maſters and ſchool- " miſtreſſes in London and its vicinities; " and of two or three ſcore of the weal- " thieſt families in the Methodiſt-connexion, " for the ſame atrocious crime; namely, " for having their children and ſcholars " taught carriage and addreſs by a dancing- " maſter." I anſwer, Though they will act conſiſtently, yet they will not act precipitately;

cipitately; but give time for all concerned to weigh the matter well. But as to thoſe who have already done this, and are come to a reſolution not to give up their dancing-maſters, on theſe the rule has been enforced; and as for others who will not, time will ſhew what will be their doom.

As for three or fourſcore of the wealthieſt families in the Methodiſt connexion, the preachers now living are not to be overawed by theſe: ſhould thoſe of any future generation be controled by the rich, it will be quite too ſoon, even then, for money to govern the church: but at preſent, bleſſed be God! there is little danger. For I do not apprehend that many of our preſent rich families wiſh to control their teachers, in what they agree on in their public Conferences; but would rather pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand, than endeavour to ſubvert rule and order; and thereby weaken the hands of thoſe who are daily labouring for their good. But if two or three ſhould be influenced by Mr. Davis, or others, the preachers cannot help it; all they can do in ſuch a caſe is, to leave ſuch refractory ones to God and their own conſciences.

However, that theſe wealthy families may not entertain an unfavourable opinion of dancing-maſters; but ſtand out manfully againſt their teachers, Mr. Davis tells them he hopes "theſe will have patience and re-"ſolution to bear ſuch treatment, con-"ſidering it as the fruit of ſuperſtitious zeal." To this I anſwer. Though Mr. Davis is wiſe and learned, it is ſtrange that he ſhould think himſelf a better judge of what is ſuperſtition than Mr. Weſley and two or three hundred of his fellow-labourers put together! eſpecially as ſome of theſe (not to ſpeak of Mr. Weſley) are at leaſt, as wiſe and learned as Mr. Davis himſelf, and of longer ſtanding in the work: add to this, that he muſt be ſuppoſed to be partial to his own intereſt, while they are totally unbiaſſed on every ſide.

Again. "They have not *now*, ſays Mr. "Davis, the influence and power of "Mr. Weſley to ſcreen their imprudencies."—I anſwer, If the expulſion of dancing and dancing-maſters is one of their imprudencies, Mr. Weſley himſelf led them into it; and therefore they want no ſcreening, in this reſpect, unleſs it be from

from the conſequences of following his example.

Mr. Davis tells the preachers that, "They "will find it much eaſier to ſcatter than to "gather." This certainly is a great truth; and I hope our brethren have as great an averſion to ſcatter as good Mr. Davis himſelf. However, if dancers, and dancing-maſters get in among us, they muſt be ſcattered at all events. And as to its being "eaſier for them [the preachers] to pro-"nounce their fiat than to carry their point," if their fiat be right they have done well to pronounce it; and if they have done all in their power to put it into execution, yet cannot carry their point, they muſt leave it to God, who does not require impoſſibilities. But if it ſhould be loſt through the oppoſition of Mr. Davis and others, they alone muſt bear the blame.

I am glad to hear of Mr. Davis' inviolable attachment to his old friends, and that he deſires to preſerve the unity of the Spirit: and I ſhould rejoice greatly at his determination to ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, if I thought he meant any thing more, than cleaving to his dancing-maſters.

Having conſidered Mr. Davis' arguments in favour of dancing, I cannot conclude without a few obſervations on the great impropriety of Chriſtian-Parents permitting their children to learn to dance.

As theſe parents deſire their own ſalvation, it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that they did not alſo deſire the ſalvation of their children. In order to this end they muſt wiſh them to be Bible-Chriſtians: that is, they muſt wiſh them to be throughly acquainted with the principles of our holy religion, poſſeſs the tempers, and walk in all the ways deſcribed therein. And if they wiſh this in earneſt, they will think it their duty to warn and guard them againſt whatever may have the ſmalleſt tendency to divert their attention, and draw them aſide from theſe important concerns. Now one means of this moſt certainly is dancing; which will be evident from the following conſiderations.

Firſt. It is the duty of every chriſtian-parent to uſe all poſſible means to bring his child to the knowledge of himſelf: to make him know that he is conceived in ſin, and ſhapen in iniquity; that in conſequence of this, his inward parts are very wickedneſs:

that

that his carnal mind is enmity againſt God; and that it is from hence that all his outward wickedneſs proceeds. Now that he may be brought to be throughly acquainted with this, the parent ought to endeavour to fix his attention, and to cauſe him to think as cloſely of it as his capacity will admit. In order to this end, the parent ought to guard his child againſt every thing which will divert his attention, and turn his thoughts into a quite different channel. Now it is infallibly certain that ſetting him to learn to dance, has this tendency, as it fills his mind with thoughts of the pleaſing amuſement, and of various other agreeable particulars connected with it. It is therefore no wonder that ſo many Religious, Chriſtian, Methodiſt-Parents have cauſe to complain, that their children, even thoſe who are ten, twelve, or fourteen years of age, have no more knowledge of themſelves, at leaſt, to any good purpoſe, than if they were ſo many young Hottentots! which is really the caſe of multitudes, of them; particularly of our young dancers. Where then is the prudence, the conſcience, the fear of God, the love, the duty that ſuch parents owe to their children, in putting

ſuch ſtumbling-blocks in their way, as prevent their taking, even, the firſt ſtep in the way to the kingdom?

Secondly. If children are in that ſtate mentioned above, both Reaſon and Revelation declare that it ought not to be a matter of indifference to them; but rather that it ought to fill them with ſorrow and ſhame: that it ought to work in them that holy mourning, that true contrition, in a word, that repentance which needeth not to be repented of: and the more ſo, becauſe without it they cannot be ſaved. And that they may feel this ſorrow, that they may experienee this repentance unto life, parents ought to guard them againſt every thing which has the ſmalleſt tendency to prevent this contrition; and cauſe them to uſe every means to raiſe and perfect it. But will teaching them to dance do this? Have the ſounds of the viol, the light, airy, frothy capers and inſtructions of the dancing maſter any tendency this way? The caſe is too obvious to require an anſwer, or even a moments conſideration; for every man, woman, and *child* ſees at once that the only tendency of ſuch things muſt be to drive all penitential ſorrow far away.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. Prayer alſo is a moſt neceſſary duty incumbent on all children who are capable of it. And they ought to be taught this as ſoon as they know good from evil. They ought alſo to be taught that the heart is to be engaged therein, and alſo that they muſt be in good earneſt; ſeeing God is the rewarder of them only who diligently ſeek him. Now every one who is acquainted with human nature knows what an averſion there is, both in young and old, to this moſt neceſſary duty. Ought not parents, then, to be very cautious how they engage their children in any thing which tends to increaſe that averſion? If they do this, certainly they will keep dancings, and all other vain amuſements, as far out of their ſight as poſſible; ſeeing nothing can be more oppoſite than the ſpirit of prayer, and the ſpirit of dancing.

Fourthly. In order to our ſalvation, whether we be parents or children, there muſt be a reliſh for all the ordinances of God. We muſt delight in the word and ſacrament; in hearing, reading, and meditation; and alſo in converſing with the followers of Chriſt. Now I aſk even thoſe parents who ſend their children to learn to

dance,

dance, if they think that dancing has any tendency this way? Partial as they are, they cannot but own the contrary: they cannot but own that, if their children ſpoke freely, they would own that they have a thouſand times more pleaſure in hearing the muſic of their dancing-maſter, than in hearing any miniſter of Chriſt; and that half an hours converſe with the people of God, or even with religious children, about any thing ſerious, would be irkſome to them, while the little impertinent prattles of their companions in dancing would, for hours together, be the very joy of their hearts.

Fifthly. As the work of our ſalvation is a matter of ſerious concern, parents ought to teach their children to be ſeriouſly engaged therein: to think, pray, read, and hear the word in the moſt ſerious manner; and thus to ſeek the favour and image of God. Now has dancing any tendency to promote this ſeriouſneſs? Is it not rather as great an antidote againſt it as can poſſibly be conceived? For what can be a more effectual guard againſt, even, a ſerious thought, than the appearance and performance of a dancing-ſchool?

Sixthly.

Sixthly. Every parent who wiſhes the preſent and eternal welfare of his children, ought to teach them to ſet God always before their eyes; to remember, That he is about their path, and about their bed, and ſpyeth out all their ways: that there is not a word in their tongue, not a thought in their heart, but he knoweth it altogether. Now if this is really the caſe, ought not children, at leaſt, by the time they are capable of learning to dance, to be inſtructed in, and deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of this moſt awful truth? But if inſtead of doing this, we ſend them to learn dancing, and other worldly amuſements, what wonder that they can ſpend days and weeks, if not months and years. without having God in all their thoughts!

Seventhly. That parent is dreadfully wanting who does not teach his children to redeem their time. The great work of anſwering the end of our creation, which is, to manifeſt the glory of God, and thereby, to ſecure eternal life, is not the buſineſs of a moment. We ought to begin it as ſoon as we are capable of knowing good from evil, and earneſtly purſue it all our days. If ſo, what time for learning to dance in our youth, and for following it afterwards? certainly

certainly none at all. The mighty concerns we all have on our hands, demand all our attention, all our care, and all our endeavours: and therefore he who ſquanders away any part of this momentary exiſtence, knows but little of the importance either of time or eternity.

Eighthly. Every wiſe parent, who wiſhes to preſerve his children from deſtruction, will endeavour to inſtil into them a deep ſenſe of their danger. To this end he will inform them, that their adverſary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour; and then will ſtrongly urge them to take to themſelves the whole armour of God, that they may be able to ſtand in the evil day: and that they ought to watch in all things leſt their inexperienced hearts ſhould be beguiled by the ſubtilty of Satan. Suppoſe the parent, after giving ſuch grave, ſuch ſolemn, ſuch neceſſary admonitions, ſhould talk of ſending theſe children to a dancing-ſchool, could they poſſibly think he was in earneſt? Could they think he believed one word of the danger he had been ſpeaking of? For would they not naturally conclude, if he really believed the cautions he had been giving them, he could

could not be ſo inconſiſtent as to wiſh them to learn any thing which ſo naturally tends to ſet them off their guard.

Ninthly. The parent who wiſhes well to his children will guard them againſt conformity to the world. For if he is wiſe, he will ſee how enſnaring the vanities of the world are to youthful minds; therefore he will daily, and almoſt hourly be ringing in their ears, Be not conformed to this preſent world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; for all that is in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world paſſeth away, and the luſt thereof. Now if a parent really deſires his children to ſtand clear in this reſpect, will he, can he put them under the tuition of a dancing-maſter, whoſe very profeſſion is, to ſow, water, and bring up to maturity, the ſeeds of folly and vanity.

Tenthly. A wiſe and humble parent cannot but wiſh that his children may learn of Chriſt to be meek and lowly of heart, that they may find reſt unto their ſouls; and will wiſh them to appear ſo in all their outward deportment. And he will urge them to this, by telling them that God reſiſteth the proud,

but

but giveth grace to the humble. But ſuppoſe after theſe important warnings and admonitions, Miſs is told that ſhe is going to learn to dance, and that ſhe muſt mind her maſter and be very clever; and that ſhe muſt not ſuffer herſelf to be excelled by the firſt lady in the ſchool: moreover, when ſhe comes home in the holidays ſhe muſt give her mamma and pappa a ſpecimen of her improvement; and if all is not done to a nicety, there is this fault in her carriage, and ten or twenty more in her ungenteel appearance. Now I aſk, after this what notion can this young lady (ſo called) have of the lectures on humility ſhe ſo lately and ſo often received? Will ſhe not think that humility is of no great importance? or elſe that her parents are dreadfully inconſiſtent!

Eleventhly. It is the indiſpenſable duty of all Chriſtians, both parents and children, to deny themſelves, and to take up their croſs daily, and follow Chriſt. Ought not parents then to labour to inſtil into their children a true notion of the neceſſity of this? And ought they not likewiſe to endeavour to give them a habit of doing it, before the principles of ſelf-indulgence take

too

too deep root within them? But has learning them to dance any ſuch tendency? quite the reverſe, as every one ſees at firſt view. Hence the generality of thoſe who are uſed to follow dancing, and dancing-maſters, have no more deſire to follow Chriſt in the regeneration, than to ſink into the bottom of the ſea.

Twelfthly. Parents who are not ſlothful in buſineſ, but rather labour to be uſeful members of ſociety, ought to bring up their children in ſuch a manner, that they alſo may be uſeful in their day and generation. But of what uſe can it be, either to themſelves or others, that they are taught to dance? With reſpect to themſelves, will it, either in their childhood, or at any other time, be a means of helping them through the difficulties of this life? or add one pearl to their crown in that which is to come? And as to others, what will They be the better for our learning to dance? Will it give more weight to our inſtructions, warnings and admonitions? Will it enable us or our children to feed the hungry and clothe the naked? In a word, will it cauſe our light, our chriſtian-light, to ſhine before men, that they ſeeing our good works,

both we and they may glorify our Father which is in heaven? Certainly nothing of this kind is, or can be expected.

Thirteenth. As all chriſtian-parents are taught to glorify God with their bodies and their ſpirits which are his, and that they muſt do this in eating and drinking, and in whatever elſe they do; they ought to teach their children to do the ſame. But will teaching them to dance do this? Who will be ſo abſurd, ſo ridiculous, ſo profane, as to ſay, a child glorifies God with his body in learning to dance? or that a grown perſon does it in the act of dancing?

Fourteenth. Whatever a chriſtian does, in word or deed, he ought to do it in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Now I aſk (if it is not too abſurd to be mentioned) can any parent, while putting his child under the tuition of a dancing-maſter, ſay, In the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt I put my child to learn to dance! And ought not every parent to teach his children alſo to do all things in the name of Chriſt? Suppoſe he has done this, and then hears them ſay, particularly thoſe who are ten, or twelve years of age, In thy name, O Chriſt! I am going to dance! Is not the thought almoſt too

ſhocking

ſhocking to be mentioned? And yet chriſtian-children muſt, in effect, thus expreſs themſelves, or elſe have nothing to do with dancing.

Fifteenth. St. Paul ſaith that chriſtians ought in every thing to give thanks: that is, they are to thank God *in* every affliction, on account of its not being greater, and to thank him *for* every favour, or *in* the poſſeſſion thereof. Now I aſk, can a chriſtian-parent thank God for giving him an clination, and an opportunity of getting his children taught to dance? Or can the children themſelves thank God for the aſſiſtance they have had in dancing? and for the great proficiency they have made therein? If a child of five years old was to mention ſuch a thing, would not one who is only a twelve-month older be ready to reprove the great impiety of ſuch a propoſal?

Laſtly. As God has promiſed to reward his people for all their virtuous actions in this life, no chriſtian-parent ought to do any thing but what he believes is, in its own nature, rewardable. But what reward can he expect for having his children taught to dance? certainly none at all: and therefore

all

all the pains and expence they have been at on this occaſion, to ſay the leaſt, muſt go without a reward. And the ſame may be ſaid of their children; for they have no cauſe to think that Chriſt will ſay unto them, on account of their dancing, Well done good and faithful ſervants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. All, therefore, that remains for ſuch parents and children to expect, on account of dancing, is, that they be either pardoned or puniſhed; for rewarded they cannot be.

From all that hath been ſaid we learn, that it is abſolutely inconſiſtent with the duty which chriſtian-parents owe to God—their families—and themſelves, to *ſuffer* their children to learn artificial dancing; and that it is more eſpecially ſo, and at the ſame time highly criminal, if, in any degree, they have an *active* part therein.

F I N I S.

BL